MMU Photography Portfolio

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Winter's daylight - Lakeside

A lower exposure was used to silhouette the subjects of the image and allow for a bold reflection on the surface of the water. Taken on an early December morning, I wanted to highlight the stillness of the lake paired with the softer glow of sunlight. The harsh complex structure of the trees juxtaposes the blank surface on each side of the image, with use of horizontal symmetry that could reflect the roots of the vegetation. [Olympus trip 35, Harman Phoenix 35mm film]

Winter's daylight - Mortar

Here the use of analogue film greatly aided the colour composition of this scene. From left to right the image uses an increasingly colder colour palette, with the sunlight flare fading into the blues and greys of the texture of the brick wall, highlighting both sides of the gazebo in the centre in different influences. I used the automatic function of the camera to test if the internal lightmeter could react to the sunlight while clearly capturing the lower light areas of the frame. [Olympus trip 35, Harman Phoenix 35mm film]

Winter's daylight - Misted

There is distinct framing in this image, using the rule of thirds to pair different variations of natural life in the climate. The blur of mist coming from the background in the top left of the frame pushes the dying trees further into the foreground, while retaining warmer colours of greenery in the hedgerow as the fog dissipates. This reflects the bitter cold of a winter's morning and can prompt feelings of determination from the viewer as some vegetation survives this climate. [Olympus trip 35, Harman Phoenix 35mm film]

Winter's daylight - Farmhouse

There are distinct shapes in this image seen in the architecture of the cottage, with parallel lines in the background adding depth to the environment. I wanted to capture the contrasting textures and structures in the frame while connecting these angles into one subject. Using a higher f stop put this entire frame in focus with a lower depth of field and consistent lighting facing away from the sun. [Olympus trip 35, Harman Phoenix 35mm film]

Response of Nature - Financial Times highlight

Before my next two photos, I want to pair them with an article I read in 2023 on the subject of nature photography and how it is approached in the modern age. The article from the Financial Times focuses on the author's almost satirical response to the increasingly perfectionist tones in exhibited nature photography, preferring a reflection of how the human eye may see a subject in a more grounded environment. While I feel the author dismissed more perfected photography, with the presence of digital editing often a drawback but not too prevalent in exhibition, I agree with their sentiment around physical media and the "happy mistakes" it often brings. The limitations when shooting on film leads the photographer to consider in further detail the aspects of one photo, as there is no room for casual retakes, and discover what has been captured in the animal - reflective of "art is more about seeing than doing", although cliché.

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Digital democratisation is welcome, but the clever tweakery of editing software has its drawbacks
JONATHAN GUTHRIE
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My feeling is that editing software is best used as an adjunct to taking photographs. It is not the main event. Clever tweakery must have gone into some of the images at the Natural History Museum. But not every cactus bee in Karine Aigner's contest-winning shot of a spherical breeding cluster was in perfect focus.

Jose Fragozo's outstanding picture "The Disappearing Giraffe" showed just the hindquarters of an animal galloping under a new elevated railway in Kenya. It said more about wildlife in the Anthropocene than any standard safari shot: space for nature is decreasing fast.

I would have automatically deleted this photo because the animal's head is hidden. It is a matter of cliché that art is more about seeing than doing.

Next time a visitor goes to use our downstairs loo, I will tell them: "While you're in there, look out for my photo 'Disgruntled Seal with a Head Cold'. It really is one of my finest efforts."

https://www.ft.com/content/b2c76baf-f448-44d3-9294-92172ca2a77c

Response of nature - Deer in expression

This image captures the joyful expression of a deer as it is fed looking directly into the lens, framed by an opening in its enclosure. The depth of field shows the blur of the head in foreground movement and retains focus of the body. I aimed to create an intimate tone in this image by shooting close up to the subject and using a high shutter speed as the subject was highly animated.

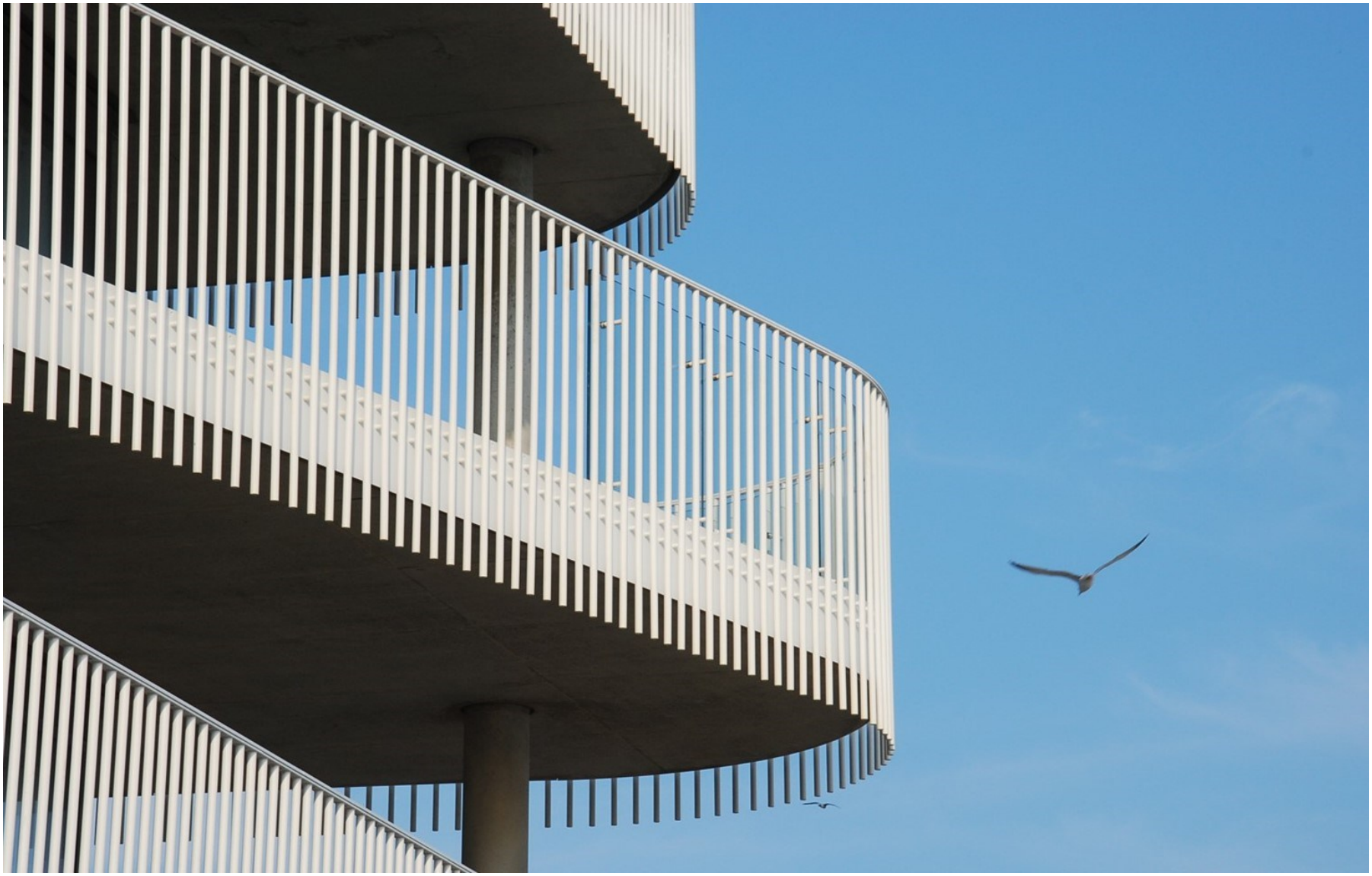
[Olympus Trip 35, Kodak Gold 35mm film]

Response of nature - Slow worm in hand

Continuing themes of intimate human interaction with nature, this image is a low angle shot of a common slow worm proudly displayed by a pair of hands. I wanted to use this angle to create a child-like mood in the frame from a lower perspective, with the hands large in the foreground to highlight the animal. The green hues in the background compliment the animal's texture with small shadows that emphasise the subject. Additionally, the use of a lower ISO film meant it was better suited to bright outdoor environments. [Olympus trip 35, Fujifilm Colour 200 35mm film]

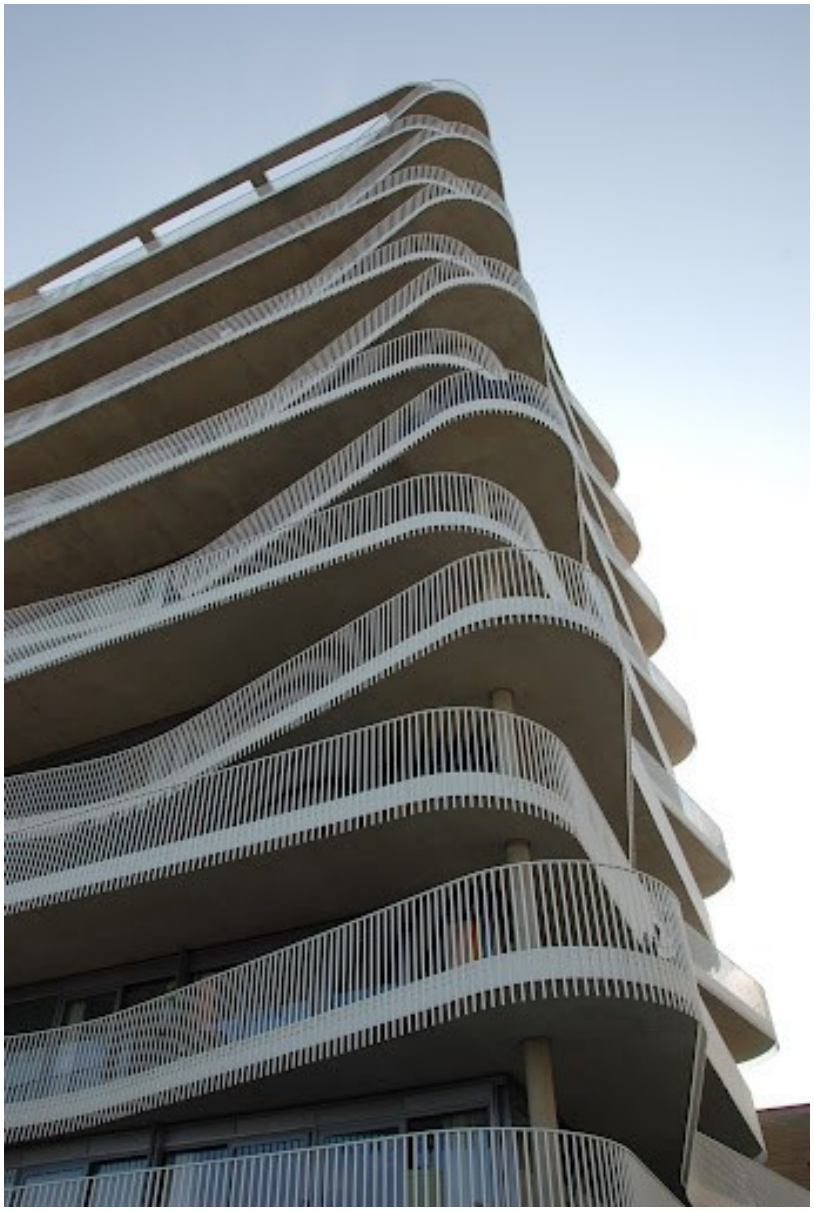
Structure / Nature - Flyover

These images are taken from a series I produced on the theme of lines in structure and nature. The placement of the sky is a recurring theme, showing each line clearly in front of a lightly coloured background. This also allows for birds and other animals to be in the frame, showing how the man-made landscape interacts with the living world. A DSLR camera allowed me to use a high shutter speed with an ability to evaluate and retake images that did not match my vision for the series. Here there are birds mid-flight from a ground view, with a low exposure to capture their silhouettes against the background and much more detail in their structure compared to the building that is imposing in the frame. [Nikon D80 DSLR]



Structure / Nature - Flypast

This image frames the same subjects while changing the perspective it is shot from. Using a higher zoom into the frame gives the building a more abstract look as the divisions between its layers are made more prominent, with the bird now seen from an angle that does not define its unique shape as much. Rule of thirds is utilised here to place the bird in the centre of the blank space and there are larger spaces of dark colour to frame the bright straight lines. [Nikon D80 DSLR]



Structure / Nature - Layered

Inspirations for this project included the work of Zaha Hadid, an architect who pioneered these styles in her work, primarily in the East. In order to pair these more curved and abstract shapes with a natural landscape I researched the architecture in my local area, finding the Bayside apartments in Worthing a striking subject. The unique structure of the building is only properly shown when viewed from its base looking up and this image highlights the symmetry of its overhangs, growing smaller as the depth of field shifts. A small amount of sunlight allows the background to have a smooth gradient texture which defines the right side of the frame. [Nikon D80 DSLR]

Double exposure - Cottage traveller

The unique colour palette of this photo is caused by the use of expired film as the chemicals break down over time into different hues. I paired this with use of double exposure, winding back the advancing lever a full slide to expose a small amount of an image on the previous slide, which imposed a train timetable board on the top half of the house. While learning about the series “Sequences” by Duane Michals, paired with my interest in 19th Century spirit photography, I used this technique to replicate placing two subjects in one sole photo. This was achieved by considering the structure of the previous photo taken on film and aiming to deliberately double expose one subject in a specific location, taken at night to isolate the board. There is a juxtaposition created between modern technology out of place in a domestic scene, with small lights from the imposition providing additional contrast without masking the subject. [Olympus trip 35, Expired Kodak Gold 35mm film]

Double exposure - Two schoolboys

Here I began experimenting with double exposure on 35mm film, winding back the advancing lever around a quarter of a slide to expose a small amount of an image on the previous slide. The image shows two schoolboys engaged with each other outside of school, with those same boys seen imposed on the left side of frame in a different environment. While learning about the series "Sequences" by Duane Michals, paired with my interest in 19th century spirit photography, I used this technique to replicate placing the same two subjects in one sole photo. This can prompt a viewer to question the process behind this image and can elevate the story of a photo. [Olympus trip 35, Fujifilm Colour 200 35mm film]

Light framing - Cathedral

Here I chose to turn off the flash function on a disposable camera to let the lens expose solely the the light fixture and religious artefacts in a Cathedral, using the natural light from stained glass and lit candles to instead light the scene. The fixture appears floating in the low light and reflects imagery of a holy crown in the Cathedral. The photography work of Fan Ho is indicative of this technique, using natural light to highlight the subjects that it falls upon. [Movin' Photo 400 Disposable camera, 35mm film]

Light framing - Kitchen table

Here I was experimenting with infrared film to attempt a trichrome effect in post production, using physical coloured filters in multiple identical images. The process was not quite successful as my filters were slightly off, however the low shutter speed and exposure needed paired with the use of a tripod for stability were successful in showing reflective light in a dark room. The high depth of field puts the bottle in focus, mirrored by the smooth surface of the table as light comes in from the visible windows. [Minolta SRT 101, Rollei infrared 400 35mm film, tripod, Lunasix 3 lightmeter, infrared filter]

I'd like to expand on the previous image further as the series of photos I produced in this roll of film required the most equipment and experimental technique I've used in the past. Inspire by articles such as "The Trichrome Process" I wanted to create a surreal infrared effect on an image, changing pallets of green to warm red or pink hues. The Minolta SRT 101 does not contain an internal lightmeter, so in order to gauge the light levels and adjust exposure and shutter speed I purchased a Lunasix lightmeter. A tripod was used as with combining multiple photos the frame had to stay consistent, an aspect also considered in the subjects of the photos. Shooting people or in high winds would risk movement so I went for indoor shots of stationary objects. Unfortunately it was the filters that made the photos unsuccessful in achieving this effect, as the filter discs available to me were not a true blue and green which offsets the light balance. However, the photos I did produce were slightly different to an average black and white film because of these experimental filters and the equipment used, so I was pleased with the resulting shades and overall control of the light entering the camera. I will definitely be trying this experiment again in future, as I now understand much more about the technique and have more experience in post production. The lightmeter is a tool I use to this day which produces much more consistent and confident results on film as the light levels are electronically gauged with a secondary device.

All examples above sourced from Ilford photo

https://www.ilfordphoto.com/the-trichrome-process/?___store=ilford_uk&___from_store=ilford_brochure

Disc sets initial asa and f stop desired with settings for day / night also

Activates while holding button on the right hand side

Light sensitive diode - moveable cover to preserve the diode by not saturating it with light

Red line points to exposure number and considers the shutter speed / asa setting

Light framing - Outside window

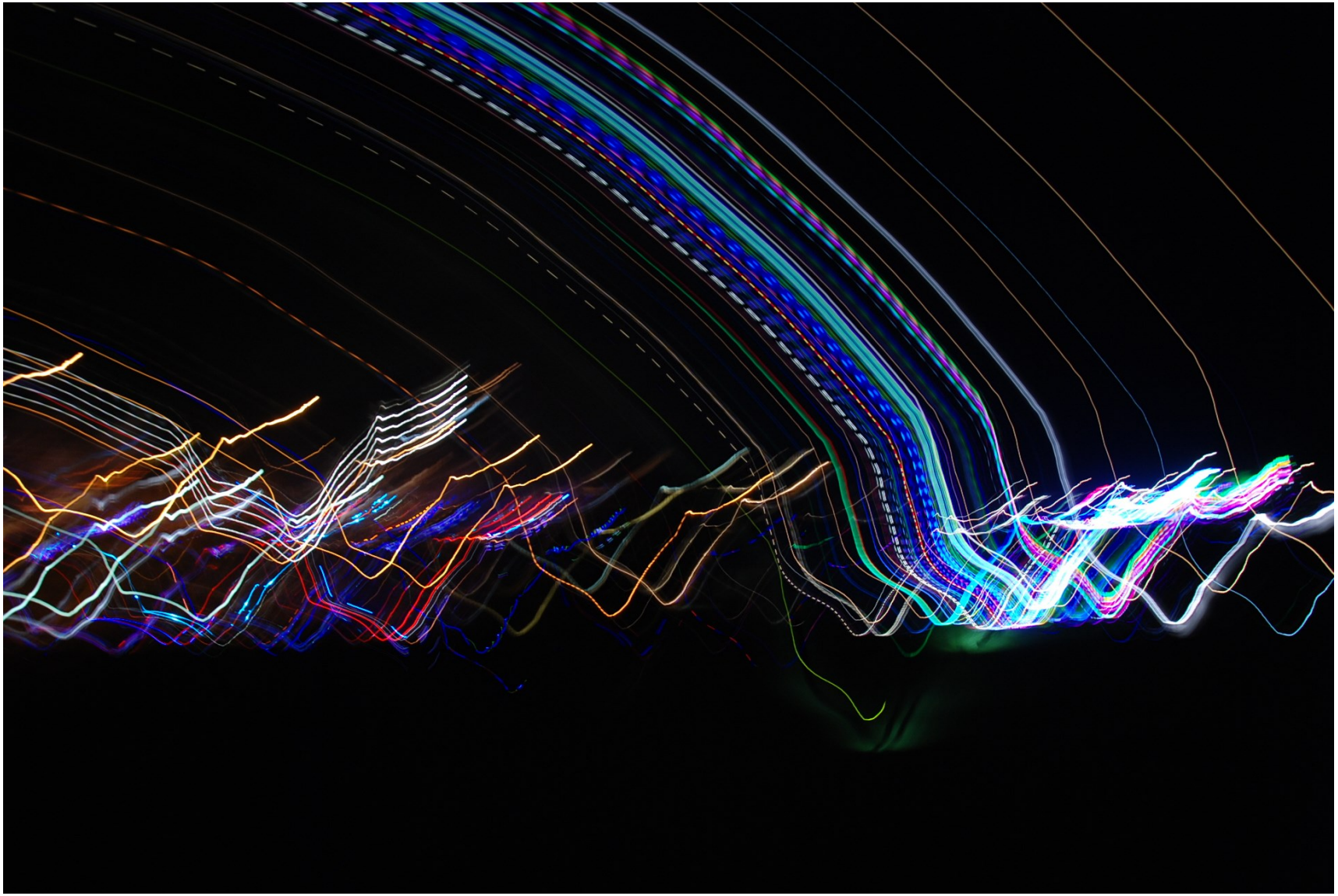
This image frames a sunset seen in the background in a glass window at the side of the image. I achieved this by lowering the f stop in order to not saturate the reflecting light and positioning the camera at the correct angle to frame both examples of the light. The use of film adds a slight grain to the image which softens the glow of the light, contrasting the dull building in which it's reflected. [Olympus trip 35, Harman Phoenix 35mm film]

Light painting - Bonfire parade

With use of a DSLR camera I began experimenting with light painting, setting the f stop to a low number and deliberately moving the camera in a specific shape as it exposes. This image shows a parade of people holding both LED and fire torches, with the top of the image following the movement of the lens and the more dense section at the bottom a more chaotic blend of light and bright colour. The shapes created are similar to those of people which mirrors the environment and could personify the torches collectively. [Nikon D80 DSLR]

Light painting - Back seat

This image is taken from the back seat of a car, using the thicker immediate light for larger painting while the light in the background creates thinner more abstract structures. It was challenging to capture these textures as the environment continually changes in a moving vehicle and my camera settings had to match the exposure or shutter speed needed, however a digital camera meant I could evaluate the effects of different techniques immediately. [Nikon D80 DSLR]



Light painting - Neon rainbow

Here I continued experimenting with light painting and the shapes a low shutter speed can make as it warps stationary light. The movement in this photo is clearly defined as the light changes from a chaotic movement into a uniform curve similar to a rainbow. The black backdrop highly benefitted the light standing out in the frame and I wanted to select some thinner light sources in this photo to define each strand against it. My interest in this technique was prompted by an interview with light painting specialist Russel Klimas with The Nerdy Photographer, discussing his view when approaching light painting and trying to visualise the end product with the assets in front of your camera.

Community - Bonfire audience

Using a low exposure and a relatively high shutter speed I was able to silhouette a group of onlookers in front of a large fire. Their proximity to the fire gives the figures a warm glow to their outlines and visually represents the strength of a bonfire. There are details in the structure of firewood as it remains still but the image becomes more abstract further up the frame, creating less defined, more chaotic shapes than in the audience. [Nikon D80 DSLR]

Community - Infinite chair

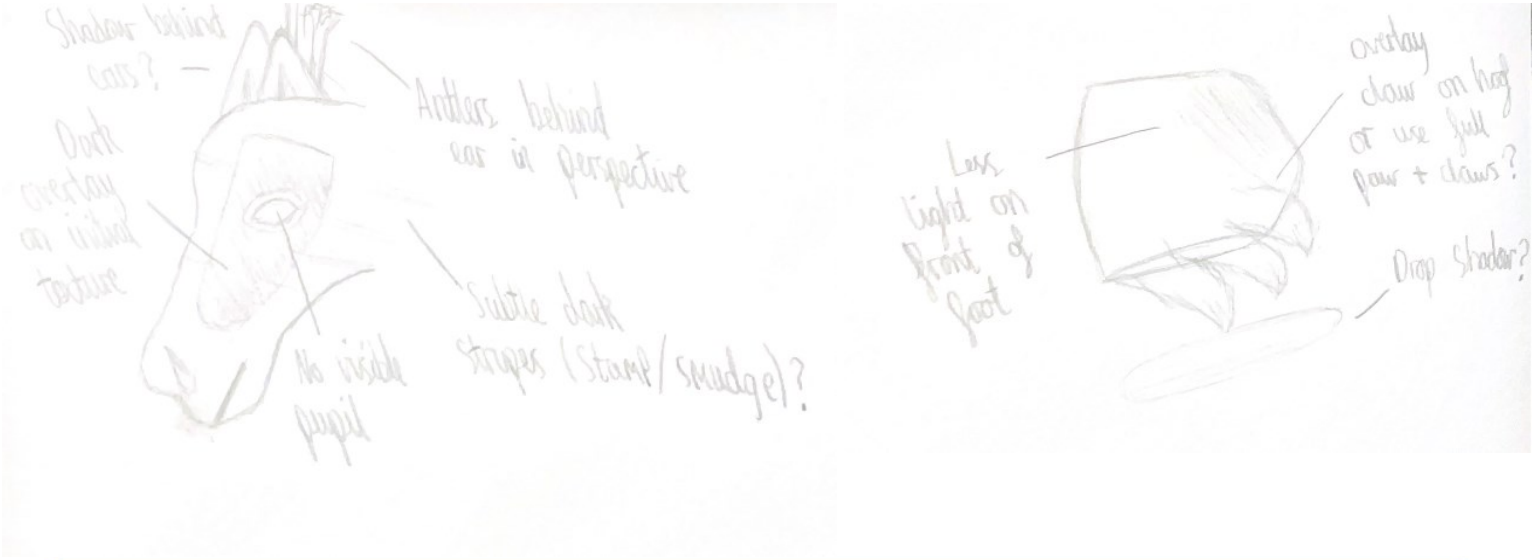
This image uses a lower depth of field to focus on the chairlift in the foreground carrying three people, making the remainder of the chairs fade into the background. The string of chairs is deliberately placed to the left side of the cable to include this connection. The snow covered background provides a blank backdrop for the three subjects to stand out, with no indication of how high they may be and their colours popping in contrast. The choice to shoot in portrait greatly benefitted the framing of a thinner subject, placed in the centre of the image for emphasis. [Olympus trip 35, Kodak Gold 200 35mm film]

Community - Busker

Taken from a visit to the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, the image depicts a busker just outside of the comparatively ornate structure performing with bubbles. I wanted to capture the simplicity of the man's work in the first stages of this act, showing the interesting structure of bubbles before they dissipate and the moment is lost. I achieved this with a high shutter speed and positioning with the sun shining light from behind the frame to create small spots of light on the colouring in the bubbles. [Olympus trip 35, Fujifilm Colour 200 35mm film]

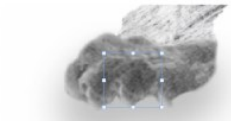
Hybrid creatures project [Adobe Photoshop]

In a project during my study of L2 PCMF I was tasked to create a conceptual "hybrid creature", using Adobe Photoshop and a combination of different images to achieve this final product. For example, I produced a donkey / zebra / lynx hybrid, which involved blending different features of each animal such as fur texture, horns and claws with an initial subject using the photoshop toolset. This project utilised the pen tool to cut out each image smoothly initially to create each layer to be used. The next stage was the blending process, using tools such as the clone stamp, pixel expander and brush to paint different styles on combined layers. There were some issues with perspective which I resolved by transforming (warp tool) and replacing certain layers, with consistent layer styles pasted to match each texture. The skills I gained from this assignment will be highly beneficial to my photography in future as I have the ability to transform and render my images with subtle or bold editing styles.

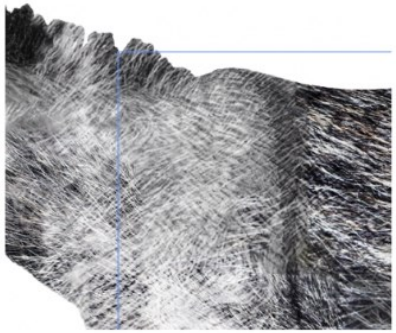

Shadow behind ears?
Dark overlay on inital texture
Antlers behind ear in perspective
No visible pupil
Subtle dark stripes (Stamp/smudge)?
Less light on front of foot
overlay claw on top or use just paw + claws?
Drop shadow?

Task 3: Hybrid Creature Creation #2 - Visualisation

Badginux production screenshots



Extra claw added to work with perspective using pen tool, drop shadow added to be more convincing and layer style pasted on all paws



Separate fur textures blended in with overlay and smudge / clone stamp tool to create a softer look.

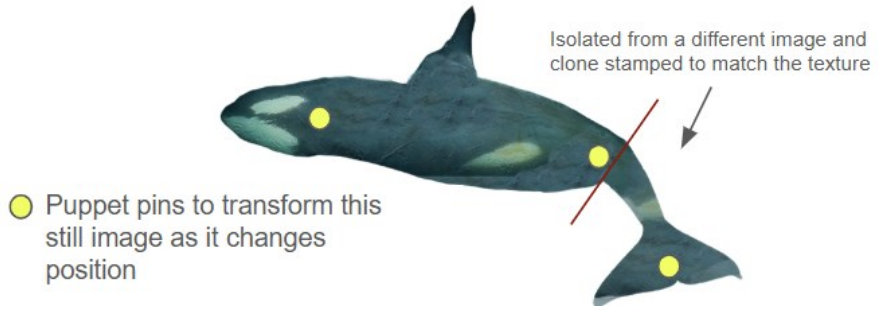
Dark line near muzzle painted with soft brush and bordered with pen tool, initial donkey texture kept for different fur texture

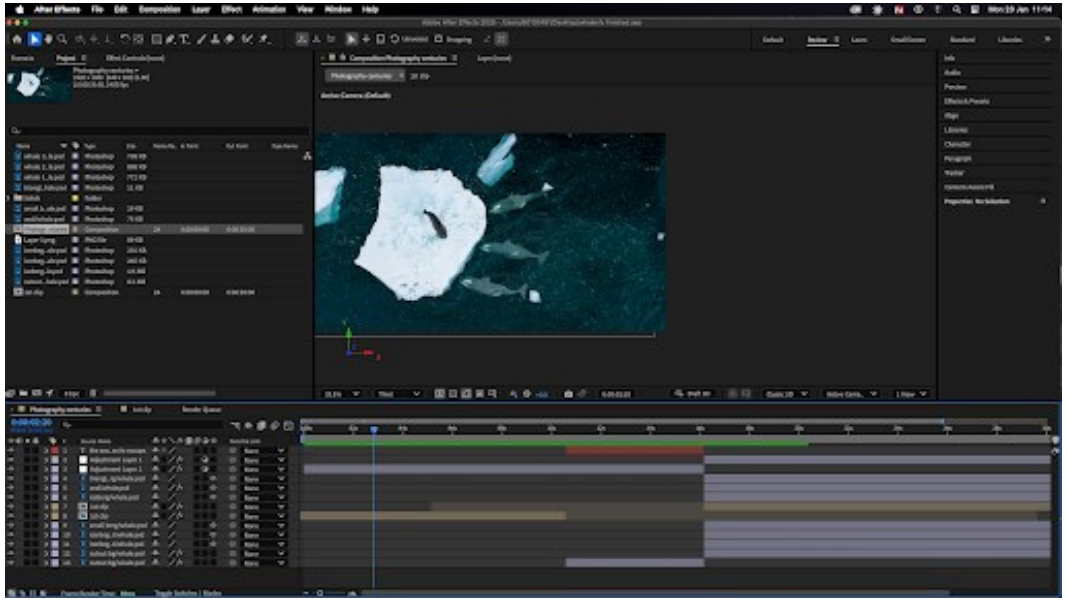
Here there are some digital and physical developments of this project, outlining the initial stages of idea through to testing these ideas with more detailed assets. I wanted to note down the tools I could use to make sure these idea could translate effectively, such as planning for work with texture overlay in the first sketch which was important in the blending and overall realism of the piece. I also like to experiment with different ideas and evaluate smaller aspects of a project in sketch work by isolating features in different formats.

After Effects project - Nature parallax shift animation

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WBgFxkL0xoXmwVZcrbXE6RQnJUkXzgZI/view?usp=drive_link

Link to full video


Isolated from a different image and clone stamped to match the texture
Puppet pins to transform this still image as it changes position



These tails were made from scratch by sourcing an outline of the shape then clone stamping the texture on top and blending the seperate layers together. This was due to the perspective of the original photo not showing their tails and I wanted to show a higher depth of movement in the animation.

Here the many layers used are displayed, with keyframes timing the events of the scene and the objects visible from 3 dimensions with the perspective rotation tool.

In addition to the hybrid creatures project I produced a parallax shift animation, using Adobe After Effects in conjunction with Photoshop to animate still images in the style of a nature documentary. This effect is achieved by placing a virtual camera in the scene and changing the position or angle of the subjects, with the background blended over with the clone stamp tool after each cutout to allow for this movement. This creates a large amount of layers to manage as each image must react to the scene. The whales and seal in the animation are animated with the puppet pin tool to create a more natural changing of position, while the objects drift as if pushed by waves. There is also an overlay of a snow texture with a text to speech narration to create more authenticity in the scene and provide more context. This technique is used in many photographic projects to enhance the life of an image and introduce a story.